

President, this is why we don't do anything about it: 83 filibusters. As to each one of these, when we finish and get the vote on a motion to proceed, it takes 30 hours; once we get on the bill and file cloture again, into cloture invocation, another 30 hours. We can't do this. We have about 40 bills in this package, every one of them similar to the 5 I have mentioned.

So I hope people will work with me so we can give the American people some recognition that the Senate isn't going to be a graveyard for important pieces of legislation. Emmett Till, runaway homeless youth, pornography, Lou Gehrig registry, and the Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Act.

I think the Republicans are going to have a choice. They can join the side of the American people or they can continue to stand beside a colleague intent on blocking virtually everything.

I hope we can work together as Democrats and Republicans to make this a week of progress, so the American people can recognize we are trying to do something to alleviate some of the problems facing this country. There are a lot of them.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### STOP EXCESSIVE ENERGY SPECULATION ACT OF 2008—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration to the motion to proceed to S. 3268, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the bill (S. 3268) to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to prevent excessive price speculation with respect to energy commodities, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, following up on the comments made by the majority leader, the American public is suffering record pain at the pump. Missourians are struggling with higher gas prices. They have said in poignant and perceptive letters to me that they are hurting.

Carol Shoener, in Braymer, MO, northeast of Kansas City, wrote my office asking that the Senate take action swiftly to stop rising fuel prices. She has to drive 25 to 30 miles to the nearest town with a hospital, dentist or pharmacy.

Juanita Highfill, of Bolivar, in southwest Missouri, is retired on a fixed income. She writes that the cost of gasoline is a real hardship for her family. Her son, a kidney transplant recipient with few job skills and limited ability, drives 30 miles one way to work a minimum wage job. His net monthly in-

come is under \$400, with gas taking \$250 of that, leaving him with \$150 per month for his life's expenses.

Anthony Meis, of Pacific, MO, west of St. Louis, is on a fixed income too. He follows the markets and knows that "once we pump more oil in our country, the speculators . . . won't have the same leverage of driving up oil prices."

It is time we get real about gas prices. The Democratic leader pointed out that there are areas where there is tremendous suffering across the country. Maybe it is time he realized we need to take some substantive, comprehensive approaches to the gas price problem. No more of these show activities, these empty promises, these peripheral issues. Let us hope he meant it when he said he would allow us to debate the issues and offer amendments. That is the problem.

The majority leader has been acting as a Rules Committee such as the House has, which says we can only vote on the things he wants us to vote on. He is going to try to cram a package down our throats with a whole bunch of bills—and many are good ones—without having an opportunity to vote. I want cloture and I want to talk about an energy bill. I want to vote on it and have people go on the record and show whether they are for dealing with this crisis—the gas prices and oil prices and a whole range of energy prices.

No more saying, no, we can't, to real action on gas prices. No more saying, no, we can't, to providing American families the relief they need. No more saying, no, we can't, to going after every option available, including increasing production.

We must say, yes, we can, to real action on gas prices. Any plan that has a real chance of lowering gas prices must say, yes, we can, to increasing production; yes, we can, to increasing conservation; and, yes, we can, to addressing speculation.

We Republicans have a plan that says, yes, we can, to each of these ways to increase production, increase conservation, and address speculation.

I hope the other side will join us to allow our plan for real gas price relief to go forward. I hope we don't get shut out. I hope the majority leader doesn't fill the tree, as he has in the past. I hope they will let us act on these important measures.

I hope the Members blocking real relief for the American people finally listen to what we are hearing from home. I hear it every day from constituents back home. Farmers, truckers, and families are all suffering from gas price increases. Families from the cities to the suburbs to our rural areas are all cutting their budgets to pay higher gas prices.

At stake are good jobs in places far from affordable hospitals, the ability to live near good schools and the ability to share in the American dream. All of these need affordable energy solutions.

Why are we refusing to help families any way we can? We are tired of hear-

ing the other side of the aisle tell suffering families: No, we can't.

Farmers—the great symbol of American bounty—are suffering. They provide for us. Why are we refusing to provide for them? They need affordable fuel to run their farm equipment, store their harvest, and ship their goods to market.

One of the biggest costs of food is that of transportation. Why are we telling those who produce our food, package it, ship it—why are we telling them, no, we can't help them with their energy costs?

Truckers across the country are suffering. Many trucking companies are small businesses. They are laying off workers and some are going bankrupt. Why are we telling struggling truckers, no, we can't?

The American people understand what is going on. They are smart enough to know that if you don't have enough of something, you go out and get more of it. It is economics 101. If prices are too high, it is because there is not enough supply and too much demand. Yet the leadership on the other side of the aisle, and the Democratic Party, have done everything they can to prevent more production of the bountiful gas and oil resources we have in our country. Of course, there was the 1995 veto by President Clinton of the Republican authorization to open drilling in ANWR. He said it would take 10 years to produce oil. Well, 10 years was probably longer than it would have taken, but that time has long past. We are missing out on a million barrels of oil a day that would have come from ANWR.

The Republicans have a plan. Our Gas Price Reduction Act takes real action on oil supplies. Right now, there are, at a minimum, 18 billion barrels of oil waiting for us off our Atlantic and Pacific coasts. That is 10 years of supply we are blocking from ourselves, stopping ourselves from producing.

The Gas Price Reduction Act will open these offshore areas and allow us to put the American oil to use for Americans.

For those who say it would take years to get, they ignore the immediate price-lowering effect of the news of new supplies. It happened last week. After the President announced suspension of the Presidential moratorium on offshore drilling, prices are down \$16 a barrel. It is now up to us in Congress to get off our duffs and do the same thing and bring immediate, long-term, lasting relief to American families and farmers. When Congress finally gets its act together and gives the go-ahead, we can see new wells being brought on, some in relatively short periods of time.

For those States concerned with opening drilling off their shores, our plan would allow States to opt out. If California doesn't want to participate, that is fine. But that should not block States such as Virginia and Alaska, where they want to drill.